

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, February 17, 2004

Contact:
Tom Manheim
(408) 277-5131

New Fire Chief Named For San José

San José – Culminating a nationwide search, San José City Manager Del D. Borgsdorf today (2/17/04) named Jeff Clet as San José’s next Fire Chief. The appointment was confirmed by the City Council during its Executive Session this morning. Clet, a 20-year veteran of the San José Fire Department has been Gilroy’s Fire Chief since 2002.

“Jeff brings a unique blend of senior-level fire management experience, combined with knowledge of the Department and the community, and a vision for how to make the fire service even stronger in the future,” Borgsdorf said in announcing the appointment. “His mix of skills, knowledge, vision, and experience clearly resonated with all of the panelists who interviewed him, including a diverse panel of community-members.”

Clet’s appointment ends a comprehensive national recruitment with extensive community involvement. Members of the community participated in the selection of the recruiting firm that managed the search. And ten community meetings attended by more than 100 people and a stakeholder group incorporating 23 community members helped establish a profile of the ideal fire chief.

(more)

The community profile effort detailed a number of key issues to be addressed, in order for the next fire chief to successfully lead the Department. These included someone who would: 1) ensure excellence in firefighting and fire prevention; 2) build better relationships with the Community; 3) celebrates diversity; 4) develop and strengthen an excellent work force; 5) manage the budget to do more with less; 6) communicate exceptionally well; and 7) lead the department in providing excellent services.

The recruitment attracted 24 applicants from 12 states across the country. An 11-member Community Panel and a 7-member Management Panel that included other public safety professional managers interviewed the five finalists.

Clet first joined the fire service in 1978 and came to San José in 1981 where he progressed through the ranks reaching the leadership positions of Battalion Chief in 1992. Between 1992 and 2002, Clet managed a number of key Fire Department functions at the Battalion Chief and Deputy Chief level including: 1) Bureau of Field Operations, 2) Paramedic Program; 3) Bureau of Fire Prevention; 4) Bureau of Support Services; 5) Hazardous Materials Program; and 6) 9-1-1 Communications.

Before assuming command of the Gilroy Fire Department in 2002, Clet was instrumental in establishing San José's STAR (Supplemental Transport Ambulance Resource) Program, the first in the State. Under the STAR program, City emergency responders can transport critical care patients when an American Medical Response (AMR) ambulance is delayed or unable to respond. Clet also chaired the statewide EMS Authority System Access Committee that successfully developed and implemented comprehensive Emergency Medical Dispatcher Standards for California.

(more)

Clet Appointment
Page Three

During his two years leading the Gilroy Fire Department, Clet earned a reputation as an innovator. He developed and implemented that City's first Paramedic/First Responder program, as well as a unique 2-person Rescue Ambulance program that allowed the City to staff a new fire station when funding would not support a full fire company there. Partnering with the Police Department he implemented a joint Public Safety CAD and Fire Records Management System.

"I feel a deep sense of pride in returning to lead the department that I spent more than 21 years of my life serving." Clet said in reaction to his appointment. "The fire personnel of the San José Fire Department have a well-earned reputation for excellence, and I feel a strong obligation to assist the department in maintaining and strengthening that reputation as we meet the challenges ahead."

Clet will assume command of the San José Fire Department in mid-March.

#####